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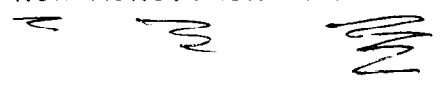
/// EMBARGOED UNTIL  
DELIVERY ///

SPEECH  
BY  
U.S. SURGEON GENERAL  
DR. C. EVERETT KOOP  
CHIEF DELEGATE TO THE  
37TH SESSION OF THE  
WORLD HEALTH ASSEMBLY  
MAY 8, 1984

/// CHECK AGAINST  
DELIVERY ///

MR. PRESIDENT, DR. MAHLER, FELLOW DELEGATES, IT IS AN HONOR TO REPRESENT THE UNITED STATES THIS YEAR, AT THE 37TH WORLD HEALTH ASSEMBLY, AND TO HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO ADDRESS THIS DISTINGUISHED BODY.

OVER THE LAST SEVERAL YEARS, MUCH OF THE WORK OF THE HEALTH ASSEMBLIES HAS BEEN ABSORBED WITH THE EFFORTS OF HEALTH FOR ALL AND THE PROCESS OF CONVERTING RHETORIC INTO DEEDS. WE'VE TALKED ABOUT GUIDING PRINCIPLES, PLANS OF ACTION~~S~~, IMPLEMENTING STRATEGIES, AND NOW MONITORING PROGRESS.



THAT IS AS IT SHOULD BE. AND AS WE CONTINUE OUR EFFORTS TOWARD THAT GOAL, WE MUST MONITOR OUR PROGRESS AND PAUSE PERIODICALLY TO REVIEW HOW FAR OR HOW LITTLE WE HAVE PROGRESSED, AND TO DECIDE HOW WE MUST ADJUST OUR PLANS.

IN THE UNITED STATES, WE CONTINUALLY MONITOR AND REASSESS<sup>✓</sup> OUR STRATEGIES. AS MANY OF YOU KNOW, MY COUNTRY HAS COMMITTED ITSELF TO ACHIEVING CERTAIN HEALTH OBJECTIVES BEFORE THE YEAR 2000 -- IN FACT, BY THE YEAR 1990.

WE BEGAN THE PROCESS OF IDENTIFYING THOSE OBJECTIVES, WITH THE PUBLICATION, IN 1979, OF HEALTHY PEOPLE, THE SURGEON GENERAL'S REPORT ON HEALTH PROMOTION AND DISEASE PREVENTION, WHICH SET FIVE MAJOR GOALS, ONE FOR EACH OF THE FIVE MAJOR STAGES OF LIFE.

USING HEALTHY PEOPLE AS OUR GUIDE, WE FOCUSED ON A NUMBER OF PRIORITY AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT IN THE HEALTH STATUS OF AMERICANS. THESE AREAS INCLUDE MATERNAL AND CHILD HEALTH, NUTRITION, HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE CONTROL, INJURY PREVENTION, OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH, AND MANY MORE.

IN DEVELOPING OUR STRATEGY WE KNEW THAT WE MUST SET AMBITIOUS, BUT ATTAINABLE, OBJECTIVES, AND THAT WE MUST HAVE RELIABLE DATA TO MEASURE PROGRESS.

AS AN EXAMPLE, ONE OF THE OBJECTIVES PUBLISHED IN HEALTHY PEOPLE WAS ~~/~~TO IMMUNIZE~~/~~ BY THE YEAR 1990 - 95% OF OUR SCHOOL AGE CHILDREN AGAINST THE SEVEN VACCINE-PREVENTABLE DISEASES OF CHILDHOOD.

THERE FOLLOWED AN EXTRAORDINARY EFFORT BY OUR HEALTH PROFESSIONALS, AND OFFICIALS AT ALL LEVELS OF GOVERNMENT. AS A RESULT, WE HAVE ALREADY ACHIEVED BETTER THAN 95% COVERAGE; AND THE INCIDENCE OF THESE SEVEN DISEASES DROPPED 71% IN THREE YEARS -- FROM NEARLY 28,000 CASES IN 1980 TO ONLY 8,000 CASES IN 1983. INDEED, A NUMBER OF THESE DISEASES ARE ON THE VERGE OF BEING ELIMINATED COMPLETELY IN THE UNITED STATES.

BUT, OF COURSE, THERE ARE MANY HEALTH PROBLEMS WHICH WILL NOT RESPOND TO PREVENTIVE MEASURES SO QUICKLY AS INFECTIOUS DISEASES.

TODAY, MORE AMERICANS DIE OF CANCER AND HEART DISEASE THAN ANY OTHER CONDITIONS, AND THE TOLL THOSE DISEASES TAKE IN DISABILITY IS ENORMOUS. BUT WE HAVE BEGUN TO FIGHT BACK, AND I BELIEVE WE'LL MAKE NEW STRIDES TOWARD OVERCOMING THESE DISEASES.

AT THE DIRECTION OF OUR SECRETARY OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES,  
MARGARET M. HECKLER, WE RECENTLY LAUNCHED A NATIONAL CANCER PREVENTION AWARENESS PROGRAM. THIS IS A NEW EDUCATIONAL CAMPAIGN, UNDER THE NATIONAL CANCER INSTITUTE, TO HELP EVERY AMERICAN SHARE THE BENEFITS OF NEW FINDINGS OF CANCER PREVENTION.

WE KNOW THAT NEARLY 80 PERCENT OF CANCERS ARE RELATED TO ENVIRONMENTAL CAUSES. MANY ARE ASSOCIATED WITH PERSONAL BEHAVIOUR SUCH AS CIGARETTE SMOKING AND EATING HABITS. THUS, OUR EMPHASIS IN THIS CAMPAIGN IS ON PERSONAL AWARENESS -- TO GIVE PEOPLE THE FACTS AND MAKE THEM AWARE THAT THEY CAN DO MUCH IN THEIR PERSONAL LIVES TO PREVENT CANCER.

THIS YEAR, FOR THE FIRST TIME, THE NATIONAL CANCER INSTITUTE HAS SET A SPECIFIC TARGET -- REDUCING CANCER DEATHS BY 50 PERCENT BY THE YEAR 2000. THIS WOULD SAVE 200,000 LIVES PER YEAR. AS SURGEON GENERAL, I MUST ADD THAT A 50% REDUCTION IN THE USE OF TOBACCO ALONE WOULD ACCOUNT FOR OVER A THIRD OF THOSE 200,000 LIVES SAVED. AND THE LATEST POLLING DATA DO INDICATE THAT WE ARE PROGRESSING WELL AHEAD OF OUR OBJECTIVE TO REDUCE SMOKING LEVELS.

OVER THE PAST 15 YEARS WE HAVE SEEN A CONTINUOUS REDUCTION IN THE DEATH RATE FROM HEART DISEASE. IT IS OUR BELIEF THAT THIS DECLINE WILL CONTINUE, AND THAT BY THE YEAR 1990 HEART DISEASE WILL NO LONGER BE THE NUMBER ONE CAUSE OF DEATH FOR PERSONS UNDER AGE SIXTY-FIVE. A PRIORITY REASON FOR THIS DRAMATIC DECLINE HAS BEEN CONTROL OF RISK FACTORS, AS A RESULT OF INDIVIDUAL AWARENESS.

THIS IS THE FOUNDATION FOR BOTH OUR PREVENTION OBJECTIVES AND OUR HOPES FOR THE YEAR 2000 -- THE RECOGNITION OF THE FACT THAT OUR SUCCESS WILL DEPEND UPON THE ABILITY OF OUR PEOPLE TO UNDERSTAND AND ACCEPT THE FACT THAT THEY CAN PROTECT THEMSELVES FROM ILLNESS AND DISEASE THROUGH INDIVIDUAL CHOICES CONCERNING LIFESTYLE.

SUCCESS WILL ALSO DEPEND ON A SUSTAINED COMMITMENT FROM ALL SECTORS OF SOCIETY -- NATIONAL AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS, INDUSTRY AND LABOR, VOLUNTARY HEALTH ORGANIZATIONS, SCHOOLS AND CHURCHES, EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS, AND PRIVATE CITIZENS.

ONE OF THE MOST SUCCESSFUL CONSUMER-HEALTH AWARENESS EFFORTS IN THE UNITED STATES /IN DECADES/ CULMINATED IN RECENT ACTION TO INCLUDE INFORMATION ON SODIUM CONTENT ON ALL NUTRITION LABELS THAT ROUTINELY APPEAR ON MANY OF OUR PROCESSED FOODS.

IN A FOUR-YEAR PERIOD IN THE UNITED STATES, FROM 1978 - 1982, THE NUMBER OF CONSUMERS TRYING TO AVOID EXCESSIVE SALT AND SODIUM INCREASED FROM 14 PERCENT TO 40 PERCENT. THIS NEW ACTION~~S~~ WILL HELP CONSUMERS MAKE INFORMED CHOICES.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES IS PLAYING A ROLE IN ANOTHER IMPORTANT AREA OF HEALTH CARE. PRESIDENT REAGAN HAS DESIGNATED THIS MONTH, MAY, 1984, AS "OLDER AMERICANS MONTH" TO DRAW THE NATION'S ATTENTION TO THE NEEDS OF THE ELDERLY.

WE ARE WITNESSING SOME PROFOUND SHIFTS IN THE AGE DISTRIBUTION OF OUR POPULATION. BY EARLY IN THE NEXT CENTURY THE UNITED STATES WILL HAVE 50 MILLION CITIZENS AGED SIXTY-FIVE OR OVER -- REPRESENTING ALMOST 20 PERCENT OF OUR POPULATION; AND WE MUST ACCOUNT FOR THESE CHANGES IN OUR HEALTH OBJECTIVES.

WITHIN THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES, WE ARE UNDERTAKING A JOINT EFFORT TO ENCOURAGE STATES AND COMMUNITIES TO DEVELOP ACTIVITIES THAT WILL ENHANCE THE QUALITY OF LIFE FOR OLDER CITIZENS THROUGH IMPROVEMENT IN THEIR HEALTH AND PRESERVATION OF THEIR INDEPENDENCE.

THE PROGRAM EMPHASIZES INJURY CONTROL, PROPER USE OF MEDICINAL DRUGS, BETTER NUTRITION AND IMPROVED PHYSICAL FITNESS.

AS WE LOOK TO THE FUTURE, WE MUST ALSO RECOGNIZE THE IMPORTANCE OF SCIENCE IN HELPING US ACHIEVE OUR OBJECTIVES. WE RECENTLY HAD A DRAMATIC EXAMPLE OF THE ABILITY OF OUR SCIENTISTS TO RESPOND TO A SIGNIFICANT NATIONAL HEALTH CONCERN. /

ALTHOUGH THE NUMBERS AFFECTED WERE RELATIVELY SMALL, THE SPREAD IN THE UNITED STATES OF AIDS -- ACQUIRED IMMUNE DEFICIENCY SYNDROME -- RAISED DEEP CONCERNS ON THE PART OF THE PUBLIC. AFTER AN INTENSIVE EFFORT, SCIENTISTS HAVE NOW APPARENTLY ISOLATED A VIRUS WHICH IS THE PROBABLE CAUSE OF AIDS. WE ARE HOPEFUL THAT THIS BREAKTHROUGH WILL LEAD TO AN EFFECTIVE SCREENING OF BLOOD DONORS, AN EVENTUAL VACCINE AND, OF COURSE, A METHOD OF TREATMENT. OUR SCIENTISTS FROM THE NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH WILL BE WORKING WITH THEIR FRENCH COLLEAGUES TO SEE IF THE VIRUS THEY HAVE BOTH IDENTIFIED IS THE SAME ONE.

I MIGHT ADD THAT THE ABILITY OF HEALTH SCIENTISTS TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE BODY OF KNOWLEDGE THAT WILL HELP ALL OF US ATTAIN OUR NATIONAL HEALTH OBJECTIVES IS INCREASED . . . IMMEASURABLY BY INTERNATIONAL COMMUNICATION AND COOPERATION, AND OF COURSE, *THE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE OF W.H.O. WHICH CONTRIBUTED SO MUCH TO THE SUCCESS OF THESE ASSEMBLIES EVERY YEAR IN GENEVA*

AS WE ALL MOVE TOWARD OUR WORLDWIDE GOAL OF HEALTH FOR ALL, IT IS IMPORTANT THAT ALL NATIONS HAVE THE CAPABILITY TO COLLECT, ANALYZE AND USE DATA TO GUIDE OUR EFFORTS.

I WOULD URGE THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL TO USE HIS RESOURCES IN THIS CONNECTION. AND I AM PLEASED TO INFORM YOU THAT MY COUNTRY STANDS READY TO ASSIST IN THIS EFFORT.

EACH OF US HAS A ROLE TO PLAY IN BRINGING THE HEALTH FOR ALL GOAL NEARER TO REALITY, BOTH IN OUR NATIONS AND GLOBALLY. BUT, ALL OF OUR EFFORTS WILL BE FOR NAUGHT IF WE DO NOT MAKE OUR PEOPLE AWARE OF THE HEALTH NEEDS OF THEIR OWN MINDS AND BODIES.

A FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLE UNDERLYING THE HEALTH FOR ALL GOAL IS THAT CITIZENS TAKE THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR THEIR OWN HEALTH. AND THEY ARE NOT LIKELY TO DO THAT UNLESS THEY LEARN AND UNDERSTAND ITS IMPORTANCE.

FOR SOME, IT WOULD MEAN KNOWING THAT A SIMPLE SOLUTION OF SALTS, SUGAR AND WATER WILL SAVE THE LIFE OF A BABY STRIKEN WITH DIARRHEA;

FOR OTHERS, IT MEANS REMEMBERING TO CONTINUE WITH THEIR HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE MEDICATION, EVEN IF THEY ARE FEELING WELL;



AND FOR OTHERS, IT MEANS KNOWING THAT NO MORE  
CIGARETTES, LESS FAT AND SALT IN THEIR DIET,  
AND MORE EXERCISE WILL IMPROVE THEIR HEALTH AND  
WELL-BEING.

WE CAN MEET HERE EVERY YEAR FOR THE NEXT 16 YEARS, BUT  
IF WE ONLY TALK TO EACH OTHER, WE WILL FAIL IN OUR  
OBJECTIVE. IT IS NECESSARY FOR US TO JOIN TOGETHER  
TO EXCHANGE SCIENTIFIC INFORMATION AND TO TELL ALL  
PEOPLE THAT A LONGER, HEALTHIER LIFE IS POSSIBLE.

HIPPOCRATES, THE FATHER OF MEDICINE, SAID A VERY LONG  
TIME AGO, "HEALING IS A MATTER OF TIME, BUT IT IS  
SOMETIMES ALSO A MATTER OF OPPORTUNITY."

AS WE MOVE YET ANOTHER YEAR TOWARD 2000, THIS IS BOTH  
THE TIME AND THE OPPORTUNITY TO MAINTAIN THE MOMENTUM  
TOWARD HEALTH FOR ALL AND TO REMIND PEOPLE EVERYWHERE  
THAT THE FATE OF OUR OWN WELL-BEING IS LARGELY IN OUR  
OWN HANDS.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH.